

Just how high have cartwheel values rolled?

By Roger Boye

This week's column answers questions about U.S. silver dollars, some of the most popular collectibles.

Q — We own five "cartwheels" dated 1922 and 1923, all slightly worn from circulation. Inasmuch as 1935 dollars bring big money, how much are our older coins worth? Also, what's the silver content?

—P.T., Mundelein

A—Both 1922 and 1923 are "common dates" in the silver-dollar series, circulated specimens retailing for \$14 or so. Each piece contains .77 of an ounce of silver, worth nearly \$6 on the bullion market.

Perhaps you were misled by televised commercials that said 1935-dated dollars sell for \$1,900 each. To command so high a price, the 1935 coins must be in at least "choice uncirculated condition" and carry an "S" mint mark.

Unfortunately, the advertisements for Olympic coins failed to explain that only a handful of such top-quality 1935-S dollars exist today. Circulated ["very fine"] specimens of the 1935 or 1935-S are ordinary collectibles worth about \$19 each.

Q—During the government's Carson City dollar sale in 1980, we bought several 1883s for \$65 each and two 1884s for \$60 each. What's our investment worth now?

—W.S., Peoria

A—Your coins probably would retail for at least \$90 each, assuming they still merit the condition category of "typical uncirculated." You are fortunate because some other CC dollars unloaded by Uncle Sam haven't fared as well.

For example, 1880-CC dollars cost \$210 and up in the 1980 sale; today many of those coins retail for about \$190. The 1881-CC went for a minimum of \$185, at least \$10 more than the current market value for "typical uncirculated" specimens.

Bureaucrats got good prices for their CC dollars, in part because the 1980 silver-market boom excited investors. Values of some rare coins still remain far below the peaks reached during that year.

● As many as 25 coin dealers will sell their wares next Sunday at the 22d annual show of the North Shore Coin Club. Hours are from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the American Legion Hall, 6140 Dempster St. in Morton Grove.

Also next Sunday, several other dealers will do business from noon to 5 p.m. at the Northwest Suburban Coin Club show in the Arlington Heights Memorial Library, 500 N. Dunton Ave. Admission is free to both shows.